EXCISE

POL 14 Viet S
(1483)

Department of State

TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL 670

Saigon 11659
7-23-71

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21
ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 NEA-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-08 L-04
NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 RSR-01
/105 W
021392

R 230820Z JUL 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7680
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Zuckerberg DATE 1/26/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11659

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

KATHMANDU FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER

SUBJECT: KY'S CAMPAIGN

REF: A. SAIGON 11598 - POL 14 Viet S
B. SAIGON 10641

1. SUMMARY. [redacted] TOLD US ON JULY 22 THAT KY IS ENCOUNTERING SERIOUS DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING OFFICIAL VERIFICATION OF SIGNED PROVINCIAL COUNCILOR ENDORSEMENTS AND THAT HE IS NOW "PESSIMISTIC" OVER KY'S ABILITY TO QUALIFY UNLESS THAT ALLEGED VERIFICATION BOTTLENECK IS BROKEN. [redacted] AFFAIRMS THAT GENERAL MINH WILL NOT RUN IF KY IS NOT A CANDIDATE. END SUMMARY.

2. [redacted] TOLD EMBOFFS JULY 22 THAT KY NOW HAS COLLECTED ONLY 92 SIGNED ENDORSEMENTS FROM PROVINCIAL

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COUNCILORS OF WHICH ONLY 20 HAVE BEEN VERIFIED BY PROVINCE CHIEFS AND MAYORS. (COMMENT: REFTEL A REPORTS SLIGHTLY HIGHER ESTIMATES FROM KY ASSOCIATE [redacted]) IS CONVINCED KY EVENTUALLY WILL OBTAIN A SIFFICIENT NUMBER OF ENDORSING SIGNATURES BUT EXPRESSED HIMSELF AS "PESSIMISTIC" ON KY'S PROSPECTS OF QUALIFYING UNLESS SOMETHING IS DONE TO OVERCOME THE BOTTLENECK IN OFFICIAL VERIFICATION. B-1 ed

3. [redacted] ATTRIBUTED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EARLIER ASSESSMENT OF 147 ENDORSEMENTS (REF B) AND CURRENT ESTIMATE TO CONCERTED CAMPAIGN ON PART OF PROVINCE CHIEFS TO BLOCK KY'S CANDIDACY. [redacted] STATED THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF COUNCILORS HAD WITHDRAWN THEIR PREVIOUS ENDORSEMENTS WHEN PROVINCE CHIEFS INDICATED THEY "COULD NO LONGER GUARANTEE THEIR PERSONAL SECURITY" OR BOUGHT THEM OFF WITH MONEY, ALLEGEDLY PAYING 400,000 PIASTERS FOR AN ENDORSEMENT FOR THIEU AND 200,000 PIASTERS FOR A PLEDGE NOT TO ENDORSE MY CANDIDATE. (THERE OF COURSE HAVE ALSO BEEN REPORTS OF ENDORSEMENT-BUYING BY KY'S REPRESENTATIVES.) ec

4. [redacted] STATED THAT DESPITE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES KY WOULD CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. (AUGUST 4 IS THE DEADLINE FOR FILING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACIES.) HE ALSO SAID KY WILL CALL A PRESS CONFERENCE JULY 27 AGAIN TO DENOUNCE OFFICIAL HARASSMENT OF HIS CAMPAIGN.

5. [redacted] STATED THAT MINH HAD PERSONALLY TOLD HIM JULY 19 "I WILL NOT RUN IF KY IS NOT A CANDIDATE." [redacted] BELIEVES THAT MINH'S VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WILL BE MR. TRAN VI, RESPECTED BUT LITTLE KNOWN CENTRAL VIETNAMESE CATHOLIC NOW TEACHING AT SAIGON UNIVERSITY. ed

6. COMMENT: [redacted] CURRENT PESSIMISTIC TONE DIFFERS MARKEDLY WITH HIS EARLIER BULLISH OPTIMISM. WHILE [redacted] IS NOT NOTED FOR HIS TRUTHFULNESS, AND MAY NOW BE DELIVERATELY EXAGGERATING KY'S DIFFICULTIES FOR OUR BENEFIT, THERE ARE OTHER INDICATIONS OF OFFICIAL OBSTRUCTIONISM AS MENTIONED REF A. ed

BERGER

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